

AMENDMENT

Responsive to the Office Action dated June 5, 2002, please cancel claims 1-28 and add claims 29-56. The attached page is captioned VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE is appended hereto.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-28 and add the following claims 29-56.

29. A cetane improver, the improver comprising:

a nitrated C₁-C₄ ester of a fatty acid, wherein the ester is derived from a naturally

occurring triglyceride; and

at least one nitrate group attached to at least one secondary carbon of the ester.

30. The cetane improver of claim 29, wherein the nitration is accomplished by direct nitration of the carbon-carbon double bonds of the fatty acids with

di-nitrogen pentoxide (N₂O₅) or a mixture of nitric acid and acetic anhydride producing

31. The cetane improver of claim 29, wherein the nitration is accomplished by methoxylation of at least one double bond of the fatty acid and subsequent nitration of the secondary alcohols.

32. The cetane improver of claim 29, wherein the nitration is accomplished by hydration of at least one double bond of the fatty acid and subsequent nitration of the secondary alcohols.

33. The cetane improver of claim 29, wherein the ester is formed by a process including the hydrolysis of vegetable oil followed by esterification of fatty acids formed by the hydrolysis.